

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for assuring compliance of a quality standards registrar with governmental or quasi-governmental accrediting agencies, the method comprising:
  - 5 obtaining client information including at least an industry code identifying a type of industry of a product or service provided by a client, a type of quality audit, and a number of employees;
  - determining auditor staffing requirements based on the client information;
  - 10 preparing a formal quotation at a central location for an audit based on the client information and the staffing requirements;
  - storing formal quotation information in a database for tracking existing and prospective clients;
  - reviewing and approving the formal quotation at the central location;
  - 15 and
  - forwarding the approved formal audit quotation to a salesperson for delivery to the client.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising scheduling a quality audit based on the staffing requirements of the formal quotation.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining auditor staffing requirements comprises determining auditor staffing requirements based on the number of employees.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein the step of determining auditor staffing requirements further comprises determining a number of auditor person-days required using a table indexed by the number of employees.
- 25 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the number of auditor person-days is determined by the standards registrar based on guidelines established by the accrediting agencies.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the auditor staffing requirements are determined using a table of auditor person-days based on the number of employees, the method further comprising:

5 adjusting the auditor staffing requirements based on predetermined criteria.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the predetermined criteria include prior knowledge of the client based on registration for a different standard, processes performed by the client involve a single, general activity, the client is not responsible for designing products, the client provides a no-risk or low-risk product  
10 or service, or the client site is small with respect to the number of employees for similar clients.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising limiting any adjustments to the auditor staffing requirements to thirty percent of the person-days based on the number of employees.

15 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the industry code comprises the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code established by the United States Department of Commerce.

10 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the type of audit is selected from an environmental audit, a quality system audit, a pre-assessment audit, an initial registration audit, a registration upgrade audit, and a surveillance audit.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the industry code includes a hierarchical classification system having major and minor classifications.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising assigning auditors based on the industry code.

13. The method of claim 11 further comprising selecting an auditor from a list of auditors qualified to audit a particular industry based on the major classification of the industry code.

5                   14. The method of claim 11 further comprising:  
                  selecting an auditor based on the industry code wherein the auditor must be qualified based on the major classification and at least a portion of the minor classification for predetermined high-risk classifications.

                  15. The method of claim 11 further comprising:  
                  selecting an expert with work experience in an industry having the  
10   industry code to accompany an auditor when a qualified auditor is unavailable.

                  16. The method of claim 11 further comprising:  
                  forwarding an audit package to the central location;  
                  reviewing the audit package for completeness, original signatures,  
                  auditor staffing time expended and auditor qualifications based on the industry code;  
15   and  
                  issuing a registration certificate if the audit package is complete and  
                  conforms to an applicable standard.